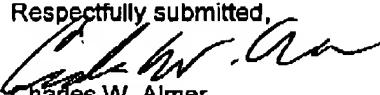


**REMARKS**

Claims 1 – 12 are pending in the present application. Claims 1 – 12 have been rejected in the present Office Action.

Claims 1 – 12 were rejected as unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,444,214, issued to Cole. Cole discloses dispersible polymer formulations wherein the polymers themselves are not dispersible and the formulations are only dispersible due to the addition of dispersible additives such as wetting agents and plasticizers. Claim 1 has been amended to include substantially the limitations of claim 7 and claim 7 has been cancelled. Claim 1 requires particular wet tensile strengths upon exposure to water and salt solutions which are not disclosed in Cole. One skilled in the art would not be led to the strength limitations of claim 1 via the disclosure of Cole. Further, one skilled in the art would be led away from the present invention by Cole because the additives of Cole would work against the strength requirements. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1 – 6 and 9 – 12 are patentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Cole.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. If there are any issues that the Examiner wishes to discuss, he is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,  
  
Charles W. Almer  
Reg. No.36,731  
Tel. No. 908 707-3738

National Starch and Chemical Company  
10 Finderne Avenue  
Bridgewater, NJ 08807  
September 9, 2004